

# Wenonah Historical Society Newsletter

Next Meeting at 7:30 P.M.

Friday, October 10, 2014  
Volume 12, Issue 7, October 2014

## THE LITTLE HARDWARE STORE AROUND THE CORNER 3 East Mantua Avenue

Lavander Bateman built the store building in 1884. Very little information on him is available other than he conducted a general grocery store on the premises. This was a short-lived enterprise as the store and property were deeded to Richard J. Clark in September of 1888.

The store was expanded with *honest goods and honest prices*. The stock consisted of dry and fancy goods, notions, furnishings, boots, hats, caps etc. During this period, Clark was in competition with Turner and McCormick who had similar goods. He outlasted them and eight other competitors until 1912. He was quite active in the community serving on the town commission and various church boards. His sons Herbert and Jim were born in the house. Later Herbert Clark would operate the coal yard business where the borough public works is today. Jim became a semi-professional baseball player

The newly formed People's Rural Telephone Company put their "central" in his store serving the thirty telephones within the town. Five years later when the Delaware and Atlantic Telephone Company wanted to house their exchange there, Clark refused because they wouldn't provide an operator.

Richard Clark sold the business and the building to John Madara. He was a glass blower at Whitney Glass Works in Clayton. He continued the dry goods and grocery business successfully until 1920 when he sold it to a Norman Brown.

The business continued under Brown's leadership until 1925 when it went up for public sale. The advertisement for the sale gives insight into the business. Listed was *the store stock of shoes, hosiery, hardware, notions, dry goods, groceries, a meat cutter, refrigerator display, and everything to be found in a general store. This is one of the best residential and business properties in town located at the Wenonah station and across from the Military Academy Park.*

Bill Seiders at this time had a hardware store in the

northern part of the Grosscup building, being formerly owned by John Viereck. He was seeking a new location. Milton Webb, a salesman for Winchester-Simmons Hardware Company, was persuaded by him to go into partnership in the 3 East Mantua Avenue building and to create a new hardware store. Mr. Webb, with the consent of his wife, also was talked into moving to town. They moved into the apartment next to what would become the hardware store. Soon after moving they were assessed \$500 for the concrete paving on Mantua Avenue which was their welcome to the town.

They called the store "*THE LITTLE HARDWARE STORE AROUND THE CORNER.*" The Winchester Simmons Company was the forerunner of our present True Value, Ace and other hardware chains. The stock was quite varied: sporting goods, tools, hardware, cutlery, paints and building materials. The barn in back was turned into a warehouse. The enterprise was quite successful despite the depression. However in 1935 the academy closed and this was a disaster to all the businesses in town and the area. The store closed in 1937.

The store was then leased to Mr. A.H. Williams who opened up a Fairlawn grocery store which was unsuccessful and closed in two years. After this Charlie Hill opened a hobby shop, which went out of business in 1940. The store was then turned into an apartment unit. During this period, Mary Bilderback, formerly a piano teacher at the academy, taught music on the second floor. Many a child from Wenonah started their musical careers with her.

In 1949, Mr. Webb sold the building to Jim and Eleanor Ross. Eleanor's father was Charlie Hohlweg who owned Charlie's later called the Tall Pines. Jim and Eleanor successfully created the Jim-El Sweet Shoppe, which was in business for fifteen years. This was basically a luncheonette and coffee shop serving breakfast and lunch. Many years later, Eleanor opened up a similar shop in Swedesboro under the same name.

## 2014 WHS OFFICERS

President	Charles Horan
Vice President	Paul Lader
Secretary	Vicki McCall
Treasurer	Carol Wiltsee
Trustee	Betty MacLeod
Trustee	Louis McCall

Meetings are held on the 2nd Friday of each month  
(except June, July and August)  
at the Train Station Community Center

After this it became Marge's luncheonette under the ownership of Margery and Bill Fox. This was an institution in Wenonah. In the morning for breakfast there was an influx of workers from Atlantic City Electric, Bell Telephone and other locals. For lunch were those from Marmac and Newton Tool Works and the school-teachers. It was a gathering place for the community, leaving so many fond memories. Sadly Margery died but fortunately Bill Fox's sister Gladys Clark was able to take over the management of the store. Interesting is the fact that Gladys's husband was Herb Clark who was born in the building and whose father was Richard Clark the early owner.

The next owners were George and Jane Bowker who ran the business under the name of The Carriage Shoppe. They ran it for several years but Jane's ill health caused it to close. Several attempts were made to reopen but unsuccessfully. Roy Duffield bought the building and did extensive renovations. In 1989 he leased the store part to Mary K Hair Design who conducted an outstanding business there until a few years ago. [Today, Shear Bliss Hair Studio occupies the building.]

The building over the years has been one of the focal points and historic centers of the town. Indeed its message is that it would be good to have a coffee shop again as we did years ago. This is something that is lacking in our community. For those who remember, we know.

*This story was compiled by the late Milton Webb, Jr. of Wenonah.*

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*by Charles Horan*

I want to begin by thanking, on behalf of the Wenonah Historical Society, those who were instrumental in accomplishing the improvements to the entryway at the Train Station. Councilman Phil Kaeferle, Borough Clerk Karen Sweeney and Public Works Supervisor Ken Trovarelli worked together as a team to expedite the safety upgrade to the entry steps that so many groups utilize week after week. Nice job!!

Our 2014 Meet and Greet on September 12th was a huge success. We estimate attendance in the range of seventy people. Many thanks to our gracious hosts Sue and Larry Smith for sharing their lovely home for this annual WHS event. An enjoyable evening was had by all. Also in attendance were some new residents who we are happy to welcome as members.

But there is more good news. The WHS Facebook page is up and running and the WHS website is at an advanced stage of construction. These are vital accomplishments as the Wenonah Historical Society moves forward. Many thanks to Larry Smith and Bob Thomas for their efforts.

This Friday October 10th at 7:30 we will conduct our first regular meeting of the 2014-15 season followed by an excellent presentation. Nick Frankunas is a retired railroad instructor from a career with Penn Central and Conrail. Nick is a former member of the Washington Township Historical Society and helped restore the old Glassboro RR Station among a multitude of other RR related endeavors.

Nick's presentation is entitled "**Early South Jersey Railroads.**" I had the pleasure of attending his presentation last May. Nick's topic is not aimed specifically for railroad "buffs/enthusiasts" (like Lou McCall) but for those interested in the history of southern New Jersey and the impact this new mode of transport had (and continues to have) on the people and places in our region. There will be a Q & A following the program and some artifacts displayed. Also, light refreshments will be offered.

Hope to see you there.

### **A PEEK INTO GLOUCESTER COUNTY'S PAST**

Thursday, October 16 @ 7:00 pm

Gloucester County Historical Society Library

17 Hunter St., Woodbury, NJ

Light Refreshments

Seating is Limited.

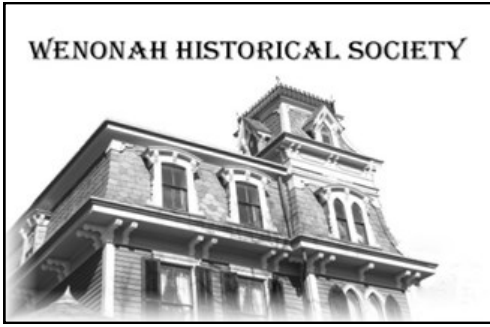
Call (856) 845-4771 for reservations.

**Free Admission**

## WENONAH

October 1914

- ◇ The Wenonah Military Academy has instituted a department of voice culture under direction of Mr. Carlton McHenry, pupil of Herbert Wilbur Greene.
- ◇ While one of the electric express trains was crossing over Mantua avenue recently, the hot box came off the wheel and was hurled through the air for about fifty yards, ripping things up in general.
- ◇ The water committee of Council has decided to install a duplicate emergency pumping plant at the water works.
- ◇ The collector and solicitor have been instructed to proceed with immediate collection of all outstanding debts on sidewalks and curbs.
- ◇ Little Albert Green, son of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Green of Mantua avenue, had a nasal operation performed at his home on Monday morning.
- ◇ Dr. H.L. Gilmour is improving his home by building a fine portico.
- ◇ The Lyceum Festival will visit our borough again this year on Oct. 29, 30 and 31. There will be three joyous days of entertainment, lectures and concerts, afternoons and evenings—fifteen events for \$1.00.
- ◇ Rev. Mordecai Stokes, who has been sick for several weeks, passed away at his home on Willow street on Thursday evening, aged 93 years. Mr. Stokes was a veteran Methodist preacher and was loved by all who knew him. The funeral was held in the Methodist Church on Monday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock. About forty preachers attended the funeral (which was very large) in a body. Interment was made in the Wenonah Cemetery.
- ◇ Mr. Holt is erecting a shop where the old lumber yard formerly was.
- ◇ After a pleasant vacation, Harry House is back at his position as butcher in Child's store.
- ◇ The barber, Harold Davis, will move from his present house in Mrs. Anna Johnson's house, corner of Monroe and Mantua avenue, on Monday.
- ◇ The band which has been organized hopes to be under way at an early date.
- ◇ The young people of the town are much dismayed to find that the last night of the Chautauqua comes on Halloween. However, all of the guaranteed 300 tickets are sold. Therefore, there will be no more season tickets to be had and late comers will have to pay straight admission at the door.
- ◇ William Green and family have moved to their winter home in Germantown.
- ◇ Nelson Berg has nearly completed a beautiful house for Dr. Harry A. Stout, who will rent it to Frank Burdsall, one of our recent grooms.
- ◇ Robert Comey is erecting a large garage. Mr. Comey will purchase two more automobiles.
- ◇ A public meeting of Equal Rights League of Wenonah (the only Women's Suffrage League in Gloucester County) was held at the home of Mrs. G.W. Betts in Woodbury Friday afternoon. Mrs. Mariam Holmes, County organizer, was the speaker and a general discussion of the women's cause took place.
- ◇ James Baylies is building another house on Cherry street.



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PO Box 32  
Wenonah, New Jersey 08090

# WENONAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2014

## Membership Benefits

- MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
- MONTHLY MEETINGS WITH INTERESTING PROGRAMS
- ACCESS TO HISTORICAL ARCHIVES AND MEMORABILIA
- INFORMATION BY KNOWLEDGEABLE WENONAHIAN

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

RECEIVE NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL: YES OR NO

AMOUNT PAID \$ CHECK \_\_\_\_\_ CASH \_\_\_\_\_

DUES: \$15.00 PER FAMILY HOUSEHOLD PER YEAR

BRING FORM AND PAYMENT TO MEETING, OR MAIL. THANK YOU

WHS PO Box 32, WENONAH, NJ 08090